

- English Grammar in Use (Grammar Addition to the Textbook English for Pharmacy and Medical Bioanalytics)
- Mgr. Zuzana Katerová
- Past Simple versus Past Perfect

## Past Simple versus Past Perfect

Simple Past	Past Perfect Simple
2nd column of irregular verbs <i>Example: I spoke</i>	<i>had</i> + 3rd column of irregular verbs <i>Example: I had spoken</i>
regular verbs: infinitive + <i>ed</i> <i>Example: I worked</i>	regular verbs: form of <i>have</i> + infinitive + <i>ed</i> <i>Example: I had worked</i>
<b>Exceptions</b>	
<p><b>Exceptions when adding <i>ed</i>:</b></p> <p>when the final letter is <i>e</i>, only add <i>d</i> <i>Example: love - loved</i></p> <p>after a short, stressed vowel, the final consonant is doubled <i>Example: admit - admitted</i></p> <p>final <i>l</i> is always doubled in British English (not in American English) <i>Example: travel - travelled</i></p> <p>after a consonant, final <i>y</i> becomes <i>i</i> (but: not after a vowel) <i>Example: worry - worried</i> but: <i>play - played</i></p>	



## Use

We use Simple Past if we give past events in the order in which they occurred.

However, when we look back from a certain time in the past to tell what had happened before, we use Past Perfect.

### Normal order in the past or looking back to an event before a certain time in the past?

Do you just want to tell what happened some time in the past or do you want to tell what had happened before/up to a certain time in the past?

Simple Past	Past Perfect Simple
<p><b>some time in the past</b>  <i>Example: Jane got up at seven. She opened her birthday presents and then the whole family went to the zoo.</i></p>	<p><b>before/up to a certain time in the past</b>  <i>Example: Before her sixth birthday, Jane <b>had</b> never <b>been</b> to the zoo.</i></p>

### Signal Words

Simple Past	Past Perfect Simple
<p>first                      then</p>	<p>already                      up to then                      before that day                      after</p>

"**After**" is only used as a signal word for *Past Perfect* if it is followed by a **subject + verb**, meaning that one action had been completed before another action began (the new action is in *Simple Past*).

*Example: After the family **had had** breakfast, they **went** to the zoo.*

However, if "**after**" is followed by **object + subject + verb**, the verb belongs to the new action and is therefore in *Simple Past*.

*Example: After her visit to the zoo, Jane **was** exhausted.*



## When

Depending on the situation, "when" can be used with *Simple Past* or *Past Perfect*.

Compare the following examples:

*Example: When Jane saw the elephants, she was amazed. (at the same time)*

*When Jane had seen the elephants, she wanted to see the giraffes. (second action happened after the first action had been completed)*

*When Jane went to see the elephants, she had already seen the lions. (second action had been completed when the first action took place)*

## Before

"Before" as well can either be used with *Simple Past* or *Past Perfect*. If the action after "before" is a new action, use *Simple Past*. If the action after "before" started (and was not completed) before a certain time in the past, use *Past Perfect*.

Compare the following examples:

*Example: Jane had read a lot about elephants before she went to the zoo.*

*Jane went to the zoo before she had finished reading her new book about elephants.*

**Test your knowledge on Past Simple and Past Perfect Simple. Then check your answers below and you will see how well you have done in the test.**

**Put the verbs into the correct tense (simple past or pas perfect simple).**

1. It (be)  a cold and rainy Sunday, so I (decide)  to finish the essay that I (start)  writing a few days before.
2. I (switch)  on the computer and (open)  the document.
3. Then I (begin)  looking for my notes that I (handwrite)  on a sheet of paper.
4. But the notes (be)  not on my desk and I (can / not)  remember where I (put)  them.
5. I (turn)  the whole house upside down.



6. And where (find / I)  my notes?
7. I (leave)  them in the sitting room, under a huge staple of papers and magazines.
8. Now that I (find)  my notes, I (want)  to continue writing my essay.
9. First I (know / not)  what to write but then I (have)  lots of ideas.
10. I (complete / almost)  my essay when my computer suddenly (crash)  and I (notice)  that I (forget)  to save the document.
11. After I (reboot)  my computer, I (see)  that at least 5 of the pages I (type)  (be)  missing.
12. So I (have)  to start all over again.

## Now check your answers!

1. It **was** a cold and rainy Sunday, so I **decided** to finish the essay that I **had started** writing a few days before.
2. I **switched** on the computer and **opened** the document.
3. Then I **began** looking for my notes that I **had handwritten** on a sheet of paper.
4. But the notes **were** not on my desk and I **could not** remember where I **had put** them.
5. I **turned** the whole house upside down.
6. And where **did I find** my notes?
7. I **had left** them in the sitting room, under a huge staple of papers and magazines.
8. Now that I **had found** my notes, I **wanted** to continue writing my essay.
9. First I **did not know** what to write but then I **had** lots of ideas.
10. I **had almost completed** my essay when my computer suddenly **crashed** and I **noticed** that I **had forgotten** to save the document.
11. After I **had rebooted** my computer, I **saw** that at least 5 of the pages I **had typed were** missing.
12. So I **had** to start all over again.

